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DEODATO
MARTIN
THANOS

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A total obsession with power drives him—to control the forces of the universe.
He is the Mad Titan. He is…

THANOS

Thanos has resumed his place as head of the Black Quadrant, but left his throne empty as he ransacks centers of healing across the galaxy: the destroyer of worlds is himself being destroyed by sickness.

Desperate for a cure, Thanos finally approached his father, Mentor, in the scientific haven of Gilgrath—but when Mentor provided no assistance, Thanos murdered him. Immediately afterward, the Imperial Guard of the Shi'ar arrived with an unlikely mission: to place Thanos under arrest.

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DR. AURILIUS OF TITAN.
CHILDHOOD ACQUAINTANCE.
DID I KNOW HIM? IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW?
I KNEW HIM, ALL RIGHT. A LONG TIME AGO. WE WERE BOTH JUST BOYS.
THAT'S THE THING MOST PEOPLE CAN'T UNDERSTAND. HE WAS JUST A BOY ONCE. BEFORE HE BECAME THE "WORLD KILLER." BEFORE HE BECAME THE "MAD TITAN," HE WAS JUST ANOTHER BOY NAMED THANOS.
GRANTED, HE WAS A DEVIANT. SO IT WAS NEVER LIKE HE WAS JUST LIKE THE REST OF US CHILDREN OF TITAN. HE WAS ALWAYS AN OUTSIDER. HE LOOKED DIFFERENT. HE TALKED DIFFERENTLY. AND OF COURSE HIS FATHER WAS THE GREAT MENTOR. BUT EVEN SO...
...EVEN SO, HE WAS STILL JUST A BOY. WE PLAYED TOGETHER. WE STUDIED TOGETHER. AND THEN, AS WE GREW A BIT OLDER, SOMETHING CHANGED IN HIM.
HE BECAME COLDER, EVEN MORE WITHDRAWN. LOOKING BACK NOW, I SEE THAT THIS WAS WHEN IT STARTED. THE KILLING.
CHILDREN DISAPPEARED. INQUESTS SHOWED NO WRONGDOING. BUT NOW...NOW IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT IT WAS THANOS' DOING.
SO, HE MAY HAVE STARTED AS JUST ANOTHER BOY, BUT THE BOY SOON BECAME A MONSTER.
IT WAS NOT LONG AFTER THAT HIS OWN MOTHER WAS BUTCHERED. POOR SUI-SAN...
I LEFT TITAN TO STUDY ON SPARTAX WHEN I WAS SEVENTEEN. MY ENTIRE FAMILY STAYED BEHIND.
SO I WAS NOT ON TITAN WHEN THANOS RETURNED. I WAS NOT THERE WHEN HE DESTROYED MY HOME AND EVERYONE ON IT.
THERE ARE DAYS-- THERE ARE DAYS WHEN I WISH THAT I HAD BEEN.
SO, YOU ASK ME IF I KNEW THANOS? YES, I KNEW HIM. I KNEW HIM AS A BOY. BUT HE IS NOT A BOY ANY LONGER. NO...

"...HE IS EVIL ITSELF."

EVIL ITSELF? PERHAPS. ONE THING IS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THANOS IS CERTAINLY THE MOST FEARED BEING IN THE UNIVERSE...

...BUT THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD WOULD BE A CLOSE SECOND.

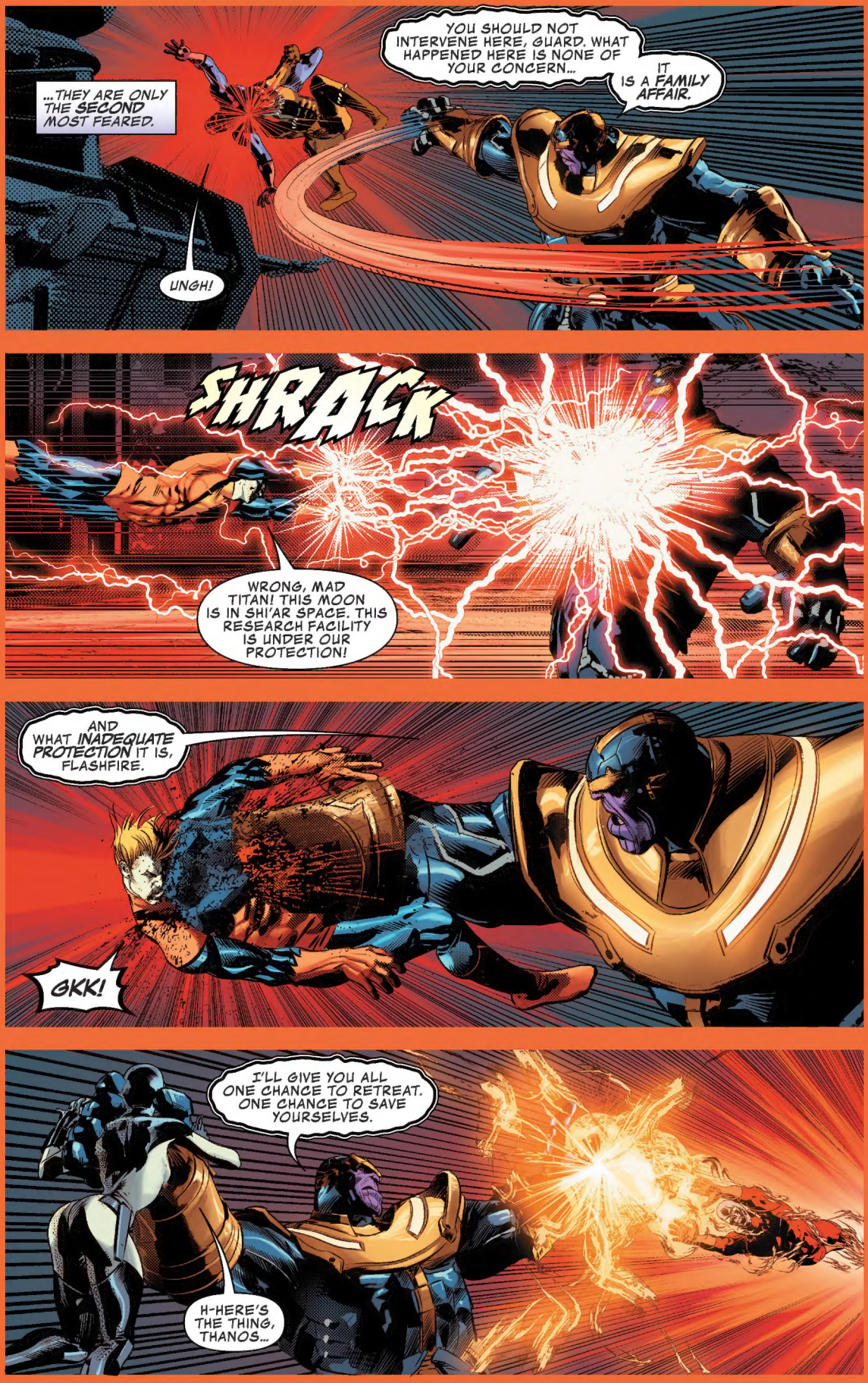
SINCE ITS FOUNDATION, THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM HAS PRIDED ITSELF ON ITS VAST FLEETS AND LEGIONS OF WARRIORS.

AT THE PINNACLE OF ITS MILITARY POWER IS THE ELITE IMPERIAL GUARD. A REGIMENT OF META-POWERED BEINGS WITH A DIVERSE AND COLORFUL MEMBERSHIP RECRUITED FROM DOZENS OF WORLDS.

FANG, YOU'RE WITH ME. HIT HIM LOW!

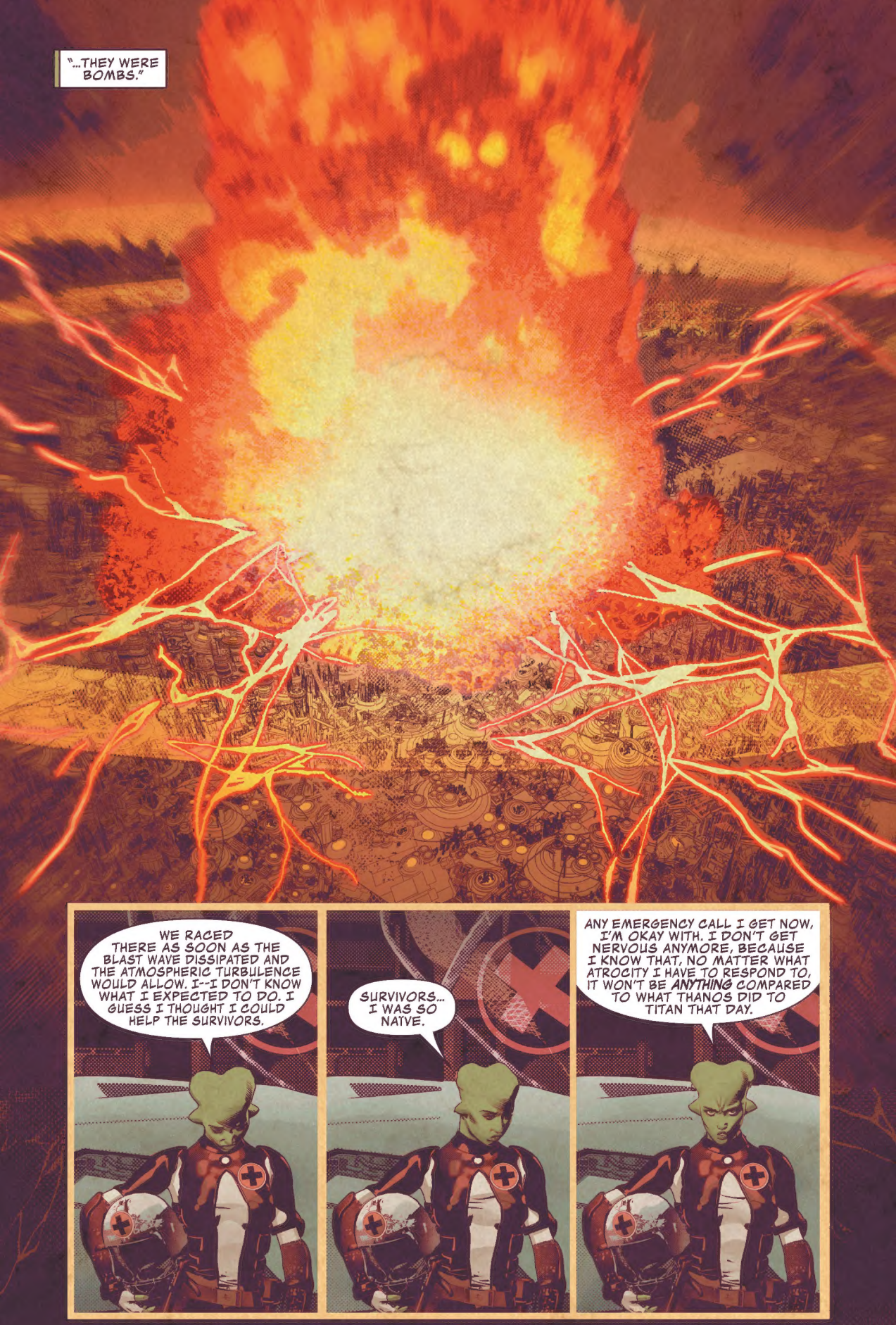
YOU'VE GOT IT, SMASHER. IT'S WHAT I DO BEST.

BUT AS I SAID...


...THEY ARE ONLY THE SECOND MOST FEARED.
UNGH!
YOU SHOULD NOT INTERVENE HERE, GUARD. WHAT HAPPENED HERE IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN...
IT IS A FAMILY AFFAIR.
SHRACK
WRONG, MAD TITAN! THIS MOON IS IN SHI'AR SPACE. THIS RESEARCH FACILITY IS UNDER OUR PROTECTION!
AND WHAT INADEQUATE PROTECTION IT IS, FLASHFIRE.
GKK!
I'LL GIVE YOU ALL ONE CHANCE TO RETREAT. ONE CHANCE TO SAVE YOURSELVES.
H-HERE'S THE THING, THANOS...

...IT'S NOT JUST US.
EH?
NOT JUST THEM. YOU SEE, THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS OF THE ELITE IMPERIAL GUARD.
MANY, MANY MEMBERS.
HRRRN...

SERIK VON.
MEDIC. ONE OF THE FIRST RESPONDERS ON SITE AT THE MASSACRE OF TITAN.
CALLING IT A MASSACRE REALLY DOESN'T DO IT JUSTICE, THOUGH, DOES IT?
I MEAN, HE ANNIHILATED THE ENTIRE MOON.
LET'S CALL IT WHAT IT WAS. THANOS COMMITTED GENOCIDE.
MY CREW AND I GOT THERE SO QUICKLY BECAUSE WE WERE ALREADY IN TITAN'S STAR SYSTEM. WE WERE TRANSPORTING A FEW MINERS WHO HAD BEEN INJURED IN A CAVE-IN ON ONE OF ITS MOONS. BUT WE HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS COMING. NO ONE DID.
AND THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO STOPPING THANOS EVEN IF WE DID. I MEAN, WE'RE JUST A MEDI-CRAFT. WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE AGAINST HIM?
OUR SENSORS SUDDENLY WENT NUTS. WE GOT REPORTS OF A WARSHIP HEADING OUR WAY. WE HAD NO IDEA WHAT THE HELL WAS GOING ON.
NEXT THING WE KNEW, HIS SHIP SPED RIGHT PAST US. IT WAS HEADED STRAIGHT FOR TITAN.
WE HAD HEARD OF THANOS BY THEN. EVERYONE HAD. BUT I DON'T THINK ANYONE REALIZED JUST HOW DANGEROUS HE WAS.
"IT HAPPENED SO FAST. THERE WAS A SMALL FLASH OF LIGHT AT THE CENTER OF THE SHIP, AND THEN IT SPLIT OFF INTO A WHOLE BUNCH OF FLASHES... LIKE A METEOR SHOWER."
IT TOOK ME A MINUTE TO REALIZE WHAT I WAS SEEING. IT WAS LIKE MY BRAIN DIDN'T WANT TO ACCEPT IT. THEY WEREN'T METEORS...


"...THEY WERE BOMBS."
WE RACED THERE AS SOON AS THE BLAST WAVE DISSIPATED AND THE ATMOSPHERIC TURBULENCE WOULD ALLOW. I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT I EXPECTED TO DO. I GUESS I THOUGHT I COULD HELP THE SURVIVORS.
SURVIVORS... I WAS SO NAÏVE.
ANY EMERGENCY CALL I GET NOW, I'M OKAY WITH. I DON'T GET NERVOUS ANYMORE, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT, NO MATTER WHAT ATROCITY I HAVE TO RESPOND TO, IT WON'T BE ANYTHING COMPARED TO WHAT THANOS DID TO TITAN THAT DAY.

He is the Mad Titan. He is the World Killer. He is Thanos.
And he appears to be in trouble.
I got him! I've compressed my body mass to a hyper-dense state! He can't take much more of this!
Do not let your guard down, Neutron!
Keep your head about you down there! This is Thanos we are talking about.
You cannot possibly beat him one-on-one. You must all work together. Combine your abilities!

NO, NEUTRON IS RIGHT, ORACLE. I MEAN, WE'RE ACTUALLY CONTAINING HIM! HE'S TOUGH...BUT NOT AS TOUGH AS HE SHOULD BE.
IT'S LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM!
HMM... FASCINATING.
I WILL EVISCERATE YOU, NIGHT WITCH!
TOO DARK?
MAYBE I CAN HELP.
FWAK
NOW! HE'S BLIND! HIT HIM NOW!

SHRACK
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE, SMASHER!
BLOOD?!
MOST FASCINATING.
HE IS REELING. IT IS TIME FOR THE THIRD WAVE.

ROGER THAT. THE THIRD WAVE IS HERE.

PIP THE TROLL.
SPACE TROLL.
ARE YOU SERIOUS? DO I THINK THANOS IS EVIL? THAT'S REALLY YOUR QUESTION?
HE KILLED HALF OF THE PEOPLE IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!
HALF OF THE PEOPLE IN THE UNIVERSE. HALF!
WHAT MORE DO I EVEN NEED TO SAY?!
"I KNOW THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE DISPUTE THAT THIS EVER HAPPENED, BUT I AM TELLING YOU, I WAS THERE.
"THANOS GOT THE INFINITY GEMS. ALL OF THEM. AND LET ME TELL YOU...WHAT HE DID NEXT WAS AS REAL AS IT GETS."

HE WIPED OUT HALF OF ALL SENTIENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE AS AN OFFERING TO LADY DEATH.
NOW, I KNOW WHAT YER GONNA SAY. "BUT IT WAS ALL UNDONE." YER GONNA SAY, "PIP, THAT DON'T REALLY COUNT NO MORE. THE GOOD GUYS WON. THE DAMAGE HE DID WITH THE GEMS WAS REVERSED."
LIKE I SAID, PAL... I WAS THERE. I SAW IT WITH MY OWN DAMN EYES.
"YEAH, YEAH...THE GOOD GUYS WON. THEY MOSTLY ALWAYS DO, RIGHT?"
BUT DOES THAT MAKE WHAT THANOS DID ANY LESS EVIL? HELL NO IT DON'T.
YOU ASK ME, HE IS, BAR NONE, THE MOST EVIL THING IN EXISTENCE.
DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?
EXCUSE ME, SIR, BUT THERE IS NO SMOKING HERE.
SIGH WHAT THE HELL IS THE UNIVERSE COMING TO?

WHAT INDEED. ACROSS THE GALAXY, THANOS MAY BE ASKING HIMSELF THE VERY SAME QUESTION.

I-- I THINK WE'RE GOING TO BEAT HIM! WE'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO BEAT THANOS!

YOU WILL NOT LAY A HAND ON ME. YOU INSIGNIFICANT ANTS WILL NOT HUMILIATE ME.

I HAVE RAZED PLANETS!

I HAVE SLAIN GODS!

CRACK

ARRGHHH!

I...AM... THANOS!

UH-OH.

KRAK

SHRACK
THOOM
SHRACK
I CAME HERE FOR MY FATHER. I DID NOT COME SEEKING A FIGHT. NO ONE ELSE NEEDED TO DIE TODAY.
BUT IF IT IS A FIGHT YOU WANT, IT IS A FIGHT YOU SHALL HAVE. IF IT IS DEATH YOU WANT, IT IS DEATH YOU SHALL HAVE.
ORACLE! WE ARE LOSING CONTROL!
I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU EVER HAD CONTROL, SMASHER. I TOLD YOU...THIS IS THANOS.
CUT THE ATTITUDE, ORACLE! IT'S TIME! CALL IN THE BIG GUN.

GLADIATOR.
GRAND PRAETOR OF THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD AND MAJESTOR OF THE SHI'AR EMPIRE.
TO SAY THAT THANOS HAS BEEN A BLIGHT ON THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE WOULD BE A GROSS UNDERSTATEMENT.
IN ALL MY TIME WITH THE IMPERIAL GUARD AND ALL MY TIME AS ITS GRAND PRAETOR, NO OTHER BEING HAS WROUGHT AS MUCH DEATH AND DESTRUCTION AND CHAOS AS THE MAD TITAN.
BUT...AS WE ALL KNOW, THE UNIVERSE IS A COMPLICATED PLACE. POLITICS OFTEN TRUMP COMMON SENSE.
IF IT WERE UP TO ME, WE ALL WOULD HAVE PUT ASIDE OUR DIFFERENCES AND BANDED TOGETHER LONG AGO TO DESTROY THANOS.
WELL, NOW IT IS UP TO ME. THANOS HAS MADE A GREAT MISTAKE COMING HERE TO SHI'AR SPACE. NOW HE IS IN MY TERRITORY.
OF COURSE, I REALIZE IT IS NOT THAT SIMPLE. THANOS IS A BEING OF GREAT POWER, NOT SOME COMMON THUG.
BUT...
...ORACLE TELLS ME THINGS MAY HAVE CHANGED. HER SENSORS HAVE DETECTED SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN THANOS' PHYSIOLOGY... A FLAW.
SO NOW WE APPLY PRESSURE AND TEST HER THEORY.
GRAND PRAETOR, ORACLE HAS SENT ME TO TELL YOU THAT IT HAS BEGUN. IT IS TIME, SIR.
EXCELLENT. NOW WE SEE IF THE MAD TITAN BREAKS.

DID YOU HEAR ME, ORACLE? IT'S TIME FOR THE BIG GUN.
YES. I AM WORKING ON IT. IN THE MEANTIME, I SUGGEST YOU STOP PANICKING, GET CONTROL OF THE GUARD AND HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING YOU HAVE.
SHRACK
YOU HEARD HER! HIT HIM! ALL OF YOU. NOW!
KRAKOOM
FWASH
I-- I...
ENOUGH!

YOU.
ME.
KRAK

THANOS OF TITAN...
...YOU ARE NOW A PRISONER OF THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM.
PICK HIM UP...TAKE HIM TO THE PRISON.
TO BE CONTINUED!

THANOS

Greetings, space travelers! I am known as Galactic Assistant Editor Kathleen, and it is with great pomp and ceremony that I welcome you to the letters page for THANOS! We've received a space-bushel of letters we'd love to print—thank you!—but I'm writing to you from the past in a very busy week just before the holidays—oh, no! So we'll keep it short for now, but keep your letters coming in! Lemire, Deodato, and Martin have a space-barn burner of a story ahead, and we'll want to hear how you all like it! Letters, engage!

Jeff Lemire is one of my favorite writers. His run on *Green Arrow* for DC was excellent and his modern take on Moon Knight is fantastic. One of his greatest abilities is to redefine the characters. So I would logically read a new series by him about Thanos.

But Thanos is a complex and significant character that has a perfect mythology created by Jim Starlin. Therefore, even though I had faith in Jeff Lemire, I was a bit afraid to be disappointed by this new series, but I wasn't at all. I loved this first issue! Lemire reminds us why Thanos is one of the most evil and fascinating comic book villains of all time. But the story is more than just another epic cosmic saga with the Infinity Gauntlet at the end of the universe, it's about Thanos himself: his family, his glory, and his revenge. Lemire's direction is definitely interesting. The series perfectly carries its title.

One of the best surprises of the issue was Mike Deodato. I didn't know this artist too much. His style is fascinating. The faces are expressive, the shades fit with the tone of the story, and the colors are neat. I loved the page layouts. They really provide this series a distinctive look.

Now, I am going to read the series and, for the first time, I am happy to say, "Thanos returns!"

Adam K.

Adam, I could not agree with you harder. Before I started working at Marvel, my favorite Jeff Lemire books (*Essex County*, *Underwater Welder*) gave personal and family stories a kind of mythic treatment, and I think that approach is going to work really well with Thanos. There are people who love him as an iconic Eternal, and people who are invested in his journey as, like, a dude, and I believe this book has something for all of them, and everyone else. And Mike Deodato is doing some special magic with THANOS, but you gotta check out more of his work!

Anyone who says "Grease" is the word has not looked at THANOS #1. As stated in Jordan D. White's editorial, "gorgeous" is the word. I've been a fan of Mike Deodato's work for years, and this is some of his best art. His use of thin lines, particularly with the multiple panel breakdowns on some pages, is extremely effective. And what a Zip-A-Tone fest! Marvelous (so to speak). Was actual Zip-A-Tone used, or is this something Mike creates completely himself?

To the story: I'm a bit skeptical of the conceit of this plotline, "Thanos is dying." This has been used so many times to poor effect with so many characters that I have my doubts whether it can be effective, particularly with a character so close to Death (literally and figuratively) in his past appearances. I'm also a bit disappointed that Jeff Lemire chose to kill off Corvus Glaive in the first issue, not because I have any real love for the character, but it might have been useful to have a "fair" tyrant around longer to play off the "unfair" tyrant that is Thanos. And L*b*--I mean Tryco Slatterus--is a character that, somehow, I don't remember encountering in all my years of reading Marvel's cosmic comics, yet he's got quite the history. It remains to be seen whether something original can be done with someone drawn this way; at least, thankfully, his speech pattern doesn't sound like his counterparts in other people's books. Kudos to Lemire for the narration throughout the story, though; it felt like Jim Starlin, creator of Thanos, would approve, without it being a direct steal.

So for the moment, it's the art that will draw (sorry) me back for the next issue, but it's my hope that the story will grow to match the look. I also hope that you keep this story confined to the one book, and don't try to do a line-wide--or even a cosmic-books-wide--crossover anytime soon. Feel free to make it big, but only within the boundaries of the comic known as THANOS!

Sincerely,
Mark Zutkoff
Plano, TX

Thanks for giving us a chance, Mark! I can tell you, even if you ONLY stick around for the art, it's going to be worth it. Mike Deodato works digitally, so it's virtual Zip-A-Tone, but he's making very careful, deliberate choices about the textures in this book. It's amazing that there's so much to talk about in terms of the style Deodato's bringing to THANOS, PLUS an issue like this, with a bunch of characters, has crystal-clear storytelling. But stick around for the story, too! And for Tryco Statterus, Champion of the Universe!

I wanted to write in for the first time ever. I have enjoyed comics for over 20 years and never until reading the first few pages of THANOS #1 have I had to stop reading for a second and say, "damn, Thanos is a badass!" Great way to start a series and I look forward to the rest!

Keep it up,
Justin Garriss
Comix Connection

YEAH! Glad to hear from you for the first time ever, Justin! And THANOS is rated Parental Advisory, so feel free to stop reading and say, "&%$#! This %&@$ Thanos is a badass %@$#!!"

That does it for this month! Here's the part where I try to entice you guys to write more letters by asking you to suggest names for the letters page. My current top choices are "The Death Letter Office" and "Hail and Kill"..."Mad Typin'"? I'll stop, you go. Send your thoughts and feedback to mheroes@marvel.com, and mark it all "Okay to print." Next time, Thane and his crew burst back into the foreground!

See you soon!

Kathleen

NEXT MONTH:

Send letters to **MHEROES@MARVEL.COM** or **135 W 50th St, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10020.** (Please mark **"OKAY TO PRINT."**)